

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 06367 180944Z

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SY, EG, JO, XF
SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN -- OCTOBER 16 ASAD VISIT AND
RIYADH MINI SUMMIT

SUMMARY: KING APPEARS QUITE CONCERNED THAT ASAD WILL RUN
INTO EXTREMELY HEAVY PRESSURE AT RIYADH AND HAVE TO GIVE
GROUND. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER DISCUSSING ANOTHER SUBJECT WITH KING (SEPTTEL)
CONVERSATION MOVED NATURALLY TO ASAD'S VISIT TO AMMAN
OCTOBER 16 ON WAY TO RIYADH. KING SAID THAT ASAD HAD
INSISTED ON STOPPING IN AMMAN ON WAY TO RIYADH TO DIS-
CUSS SITUATION.
2. KING THEN NOTED HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT TWO DEVELOPMENTS
(A) INDICATION (WHICH KING SAID HE LET SLIP) FROM MOROCCAN
COURT OFFICIAL MOHAMMED BENSUDA, WHO HAS RECENTLY BEEN
IN SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT, THAT SAUDIS
AND KUWAITIS PREPARED TO ASSERT HEAVY FINANCIAL PRESSURE
ON ASAD TO COME TO TERMS WITH EGYPTIAN POSITION ON
LEBANON WHICH KING SAID HE BELIEVES SAUDIS SUPPORT.
SECOND POINT (B) CONCERNED ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF SUPPLIES
REACHING PALESTINIANS AND LEFT THROUGH SIDON. ASAD
OPENED ARTILLERY BARRAGE ON PORT, KING SAID, WHEN
SYRIANS DISCOVERED 17 SHIPS IN HARBOR UNLOADING ARMS AND
AMMUNITION. KING SAYS SYRIANS CLAIM SUPPLIES INCLUDE 16,000
ROUNDS OF RPG AMMUNITION AND SEVERAL THOUSAND LAUNCHERS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 06367 180944Z

AS WELL AS "MILLIONS" OF ROUNDS OF SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION AND

OTHER ITEMS SUCH AS RIFLES AND OTHER LIGHT WEAPONS. KING SAID THESE SUPPLIES ALL CAME FROM EGYPT AND IRAQ. KING REPORTED THAT ASAD QUITE BOMBARDMENT LAST NIGHT ON HIS ARRIVAL IN RIYADH TO TRY TO SET CONSTRUCTIVE TONE FOR MINI SUMMIT. KING LAMENTED THAT IF ASAD HAD ONLY HAD THREE OR FOUR MORE DAYS FOR HIS MILITARY PUSH HE WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION. KING DID AGREE WITH ME THAT ASAD SEEMS TO HAVE IMPROVED HIS POSITION MILITARILY OVER LAST FEW WEEKS.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE SUMMIT, KING SEEMS FEARFUL THAT ASAD WILL BE FORCED TO AGREE WITH A SOLUTION WHICH MAY UNDO EVERYTHING WHICH SYRIA HAS TRIED TO ACCOMPLISH UP UNTIL NOW. KING'S PRINCIPAL CONCERN IS ABOVE NOTED SAUDI AND KUWAITI FINANCIAL PRESSURE. AS WE DISCUSSED QUESTION, KING DID NOT AGREE THAT SAUDIS MIGHT ALSO HAVE REASONS FOR SEEKING SOME MIDDLE GROUND -- UNWILLINGNESS TO SEE PLO AND PALESTINAIN RADICAL'S STATURE INCREASED, UNWILLINGNESS TO TRY TO FACE DOWN SYRIANS DIRECTLY, LONG TERM PROBABLE EGYPTIAN INTEREST IN ALSO SEEING PALESTINIANS AND LEFT BROUGHT UNDER SOME CONTROL.

4. KING SAID HE AGREED WITH ABOVE POINTS BUT HE BASICALLY DISTRUSTED SAUDI LEADERSHIP WHERE KHALID SEEMED TO BE OBLIVIOUS TO REALITIES AND LISTENING TO ALL KINDS OF WILD RUMORS AND STORIES. (EXAMPLE: KHALID SAID TO ONE OF KING'S OFFICIALS: THERE ARE 10,000 "JEWS" FIGHTING WITH THE MARONITES AND SYRIANS IN LEBANON AGAINST THE "MUSLIMS".) AND KING THEREFORE BELIEVES THE SAUDIS CANNOT BE DEPENDED UPON TO MEDIATE A SOLUTION FAIR TO ASAD. FINALLY, HE SAID ASAD, WHILE HE CAN BE EXTREMELY TOUGH AND RESISTING, WILL ALSO BE SEEKING TO BUY SOME MORE TIME AND THEREFORE MAY BE DRIVEN INTO A CORNER AT RIYADH.

5. KING SAID HE WAS NOT DISTURBED BY JORDAN'S ABSENCE FROM THE RIYADH CONFERENCE. HE SAID HE HAD MADE CLEAR IN THE PAST TO ASAD THAT SYRIA SHOULD GO TO THE CONFERENCE IF IT WERE SO INCLINED AND NOT LET EGYPTIAN OBJECTIONS TO JORDAN'S ATTENDING STAND IN THE WAY OF POSSIBLE PROGRESS.

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SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 06367 180944Z

MORE IMPERATIVE FOR HIM, HUSSEIN SAID, WAS TO STOP THE BLOODLETTING IN LEBANON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. (AS YOU KNOW, RIFAI DISAGREES STRONGLY WITH KING AND KING'S CURRENT ADVISORS ON THIS POINT. HE THINKS JORDAN'S EXCLUSION AT EGYPT'S INSISTANCE WILL SERVE TO UNDERMINE JORDAN'S POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD AND IN NEGOTIATING FORUMS OF INTEREST TO JORDAN. THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW TIMES WHEN RIFAI AND THE KING HAVE DIS-

AGREED SO DIRECTLY AND COMPLETELY.)

6. KING SEEMS FULLY TRUSTING OF ASAD'S PROTECTION OF JORDANIAN INTERESTS AT RIYADH. WHEN IN PRESSED THIS QUESTION TO HIM DIRECTLY, HE SAID HE IS REALLY MORE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ASAD THAN WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO JORDAN AT THIS POINT.

7. IN EARLIER MEETING WITH NEW HEAD OF ROYAL COURT SHARIF ABD AL-HAMID SHARAF, LATTER MENTIONED THAT IN REPORTS JORDANIANS HAVE RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING IN CAIRO, IT APPEARS THT ALGERIANS, LIBYANS AND IRAQIS HAVE FORMED A NEW AXIS OPPOSING ANY POSTPONEMENT OF THE ARAB SUMMIT AND INDIRECTLY THE CONVENING OF THE MINI SUMMIT. SHARAF BELIEVES THAT RADICAL ARABS ARE FEARFUL OF THE EFFECT OF AN APPARENTLY (CONSERVATIVE) SAUDI-IMPOSED SOLUTION TO LEBANESE PROBLEM ON THEMSELVES, PALESTINIANS, LIKEMINDED STATES IN ARAB WORLD. IN ADDITION, SHARAF CONFIRMED THAT SOME DAYS AGO HE AND PRIME MINISTER PERSONELLY TOLD ASAD JORDAN WOULD NOT INSIST ON ATTENDING A MINI SUMMIT. HE ALSO TOLD ME THAT NEW SAUDI INITIATIVE TO FORM A MINI SUMMIT AT EGYPT'S BEHEST HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED TO SYRIANS BY SAUDIS IN WEE HOURS OF FRIDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 15, AND THAT SYRIA HAD FULLY CONSULTED WITH JORDAN BEFORE DECIDING, WITH JORDAN'S FULL SUPPORT, TO ATTEND THE RIYADH MINI SUMMIT. SHARAF TENDS TO BE MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN KING ABOUT A SOLUTION AT MINI SUMMIT WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ASAD. HE SAID JORDAN FAVORED ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT POSTPONEMENT FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME, BUT KING WOULD BE WILLING TO ATTEND AN ARAB SUMMIT CALLED TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE A FAVORABLE OUTCOME AT RIYADH MINI SUMMIT.

8. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT REPEAT CAIRO AND DAMSCSUS.

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PAGE 04 AMMAN 06367 180944Z

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